

REMARKS

An English translation of SU 1015326 is submitted with this Amendment. Consideration of the reference is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner with appreciation for allowing Claims 20 and 24-26.

Claims 11-19 and 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,738,918 (“Shen”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,247,377 (“Omeis”) and JP 4307300 (English Abstract). Applicant respectfully traverses.

The present invention provides a decorative material comprising two polarizers and at least one phase-shifting plate placed between the polarizers. The phase-shifting plate represents a continuous layer of an optically anisotropic material containing regions differing by optical properties.

Shen teaches a *laminate for display device* applications. The laminate comprises either (1) a polarizing film containing a thermotropic liquid crystalline polymer (LCP) and a dichroic absorber, or (2) a blend of thermotropic LCP and dichroic absorber. However, Shen does not teach or suggest a *decorative material* comprising two polarizers and a phase-shifting layer as recited in Claims 11 and 13 of the present invention. Nor does Shen teach or suggest that the phase-shifting layer represents a continuous layer of an optical anisotropic material containing regions differing by optical properties. Further, Shen does not teach or suggest polarizers containing elements differing by directions of polarization axes. To the contrary, Shen teaches away from the present invention by teaching a *stable orientation* in its polarizing film. In the text from Col. 1, lines to Col. 2, line 10, Shen teaches that one of the major disadvantages of conventional polarizers is non-uniformity, a problem that Shen is to solve. In the LCD industry where Shen’s laminate is useful, it is desired that a polarizing film has uniform optical properties.

Omeis teaches a process for obtaining thin anisotropic layers on surface-structured supports. Omeis teaches a data storage device comprising a substrate having a surface. The substrate surface has parallel grooves and a layer of oriented liquid crystalline material in contact with the grooved substrate surface. See Claim 24. Thus, the oriented liquid crystalline material

is a thin anisotropic layer composed of liquid crystalline substances and applied on a support with a surface previously structured in such a way that the structure has a preferred direction which determines the orientation of the LC substances. Omeis teaches a “fully homogeneously oriented film” (see for example Col. 8, lines 9-11 and lines 46-47). While it is also possible to make several layers with different orientation (Column 5, lines 31-36), Omeis does not teach an anisotropic layer containing regions differing by *optical properties*. Nor does Omeis teach or suggest the design configuration recited in Claims 11 and 13 of the present application. The decorative material according to the present invention creates a color effect independently of the external influences.

JP 43073300 teaches a stained glass comprising *cut* phase difference plate pieces. In contrast, the present invention provides a decorative material comprising a phase-shifting plate which represents a *continuous* layer of an optical anisotropic material.

Therefore, even one of ordinary skill attempts to combine the cited art, which the Applicant believes there is no motivation to do so, the combination will not arrive at the present decorative material.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. If any matters can be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No 50,2319 (Order No. A-70977/AJT).

Respectfully submitted,



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